

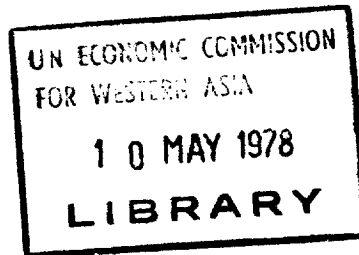


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FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS
ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS
FOURTH SESSION, IN APRIL 1977

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The Commission, at its fourth session, adopted a number of resolutions with provisions calling for action by the secretariat. This document depicts, in brief, the necessary follow up actions taken, during the period under review, towards the implementation of these provisions.

Resolution 36 (IV): Application by the Palestine Liberation Organization for full membership of the Economic Commission for Western Asia

Resolution 37 (IV): Application by the Arab Republic of Egypt for membership of the Economic Commission for Western Asia

In its report on the fourth session to the Economic and Social Council (E/ECWA/54), the Commission requested the Council to take specific actions with regard to these two resolutions. The Council discussed the matter while considering the Commission's report at the Council's 63rd session (Geneva, July-August 1977). With regard to resolution 36(IV), the Council voted to amend Article 2 of its resolution 1818 (LV), as suggested by the Commission. The Council approved the recommendation contained in resolution 37 (IV) without a vote. The full texts of the Council's two resolutions will be found in document E/ECWA/65 submitted under item 12 of the provisional agenda.

In both cases the Council requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution. The Executive Secretary shall submit his reports to the Council's second regular session, 1978.

Resolution 38 (IV): programme of action in favour of the least developed countries of the region

This resolution deals with the financing of the United Nations project for public finance and administration (PROPTAD).

As requested in the resolution, the Executive Secretary carried out consultations with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Technical Co-operation with a view to obtaining adequate funds for the Project to continue its services to the three beneficiary countries, namely: the Sultanate of Oman, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Yemen Arab Republic. UNDP (i.e. the Bureau for Europe Mediterranean and the Middy East) expressed appreciation of the Project's efforts in serving the countries of the region but apologized for not being able to participate in its financing due to the fact that besides their financial difficulties public finance and administration is not a priority area in the regional programmes for the 1977-1981 cycle.

On the other hand, the Office for Technical Co-operation has accepted to continue its financing for the year 1978. This financing, however, is reduced to US \$ 150,000.00 instead of US \$ 200,000.00. Moreover, OTC stressed the point that pursuing its policy in financing projects, its contribution for the year 1978 will be the last one. Countries of the region should take care of full financing thereafter.

The Executive Secretary carried out also consultations with the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development (in Kuwait) requesting its participation in the financing of the project within the limits of budget estimates for a period of three years. The Fund's favorable reaction produced a promise for partial financing but final decision in this matter awaits the decision of the Fund Board which is to meet in April 1978.

ECWA corresponded on the issue also with the Arab Monetary Fund (in Abu Dhabi). In its answer, the Fund emphasized the point that since they were still at the preparatory and organizational stages, they were not in a position yet to take a decision in this matter. They promised to do so as soon as possible.

Since the project's financing, in sight up to the time of this report, covers only its activities during 1978 and due to the great importance attached to its services as expressed in ECWA resolutions 26 (III) of 1976 and 38 (IV) of 1977 the matter is therefore referred to the members of the Commission for appropriate action.

The secretariat of the Commission did not, however, restrict the assistance to the least developed countries in the region to the PROPFAD's activities. The secretariat, despite its limited resources, provided the substantive support to the Yemen International Development Conference, which was held between 28 November and 1 December 1977, for the purpose of introducing the First Five-Year Plan of the Yemen Arab Republic, 1976/1977-1980/1981. with a view to soliciting external support and finance. In this connexion, the secretariat prepared a summary of the plan document (originally seven volumes in Arabic), in both English and Arabic, and prepared a position paper on the Plan. These two documents served as the basis for the substantive deliberations of the Conference. Furthermore, the secretariat helped in the preparation of the Conference report, in Arabic and English, on the deliberations of the plenary and the Economic Committee, and the finalization of the overall report, including the deliberations of the Social Committee.

Priority has been given to the utilization of advisory services for the benefit of the least developed member countries. Assistance has been given in the field of financial planning and the construction of financial flow tables, and the establishment of a standardized system of accounts for use by public and mixed enterprises and organizations.

Resolution 39(IV): Regional co-operation
in the field of water resources development

The Executive Secretary sent two communications on 15 May 1977 and on 30 August 1977 to the then Commission's Member Countries requesting governments to express their views on the establishment of the Water Resources Council for the region, procedures for implementation and determination of a focal point in each country for follow-up actions. Written replies were received from Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia and one verbal answer from Lebanon. The first 5 countries supported and encouraged the initiation of steps for implementing the decision and setting up the Council, and Lebanon did so verbally only. Saudi Arabia only declined to support the establishment of the Council on the basis that a similar set-up had been started in the region in the form of a "Secretariat-General for Ministers of Agriculture in the States of Arabia and the Arab Gulf" stationed in Riyadh.

The remaining 5 countries of the region: Kuwait, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Arab Republic and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen have not replied as yet.

Following the admission of Egypt and PLO to ECWA membership, the Executive Secretary informed both of them on 22 September 1977 of the Resolution and asked for their views. No reply has been received yet.

The Executive Secretary then decided to prepare the required documents;

- a. to explain in detail the benefits, procedure for establishment, administration and financial aspects of the project;
- b. to secure full support for the project;
- c. to create more effective dialogue between ECWA and Member states for the establishment of the Water Resources Council.

On this bases and in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Water Conference that took place in Mar Del Plata in March 1977, the Executive Secretary decided to convene the Second Regional Water Meeting in Beirut, 5-9 June 1978. All ECWA Members were invited to participate in this meeting at the senior expert level. The establishment of the Water Resources Council is the main item on the Agenda.

Resolution 40 (IV): The reconstruction and
Development of Lebanon

Pursuant to operative paragraph (1) of resolution 40(IV), the Executive Secretary "initiated immediate consultations with the President of the Council for Reconstruction and Development with a view to establishing a technical assistance development programme in accordance with the priority requirements of the Council....". He also held consultations in this respect with the Government at the highest level.

As a result of these discussions and at the request of the President of the Council for Reconstruction and Development, a revised project document for the United Nations interdisciplinary advisory team to Lebanon was prepared. Unfortunately, however, the various negotiations regarding that document have not led to the concret result desired. The Executive Secretary remains ready to offer any assistance that may be requested in that connexion.

In connexion with the above, the Executive Secretary also held discussions with the highest authorities in certain ECWA countries and with the various Arab Funds.

Pursuant to operative paragraph (2) of the resolution, the Executive Secretary co-ordinated all ECWA's activities in connexion with the development and reconstruction of Lebanon with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Lebanon. For that purpose, working meetings were held with the latter on several occasions and ECWA's secretariat participate regularly in the Inter-Agency Co-ordination Meetings under the chairmanship of the Special Representative.

Within the framework of the above co-ordination, ECWA's secretariat through its staff and regional advisers continued to assist in a number of activities for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon:

- the study on a housing policy in Lebanon was completed and submitted officially to the Government. It is understood that this is considered to be a basic framework for the establishment of a long range policy for the implementation of low-cost housing in Lebanon. This study was also submitted to interested United Nations agencies.

- at the official request of the Council for Reconstruction and Development, advisory services were provided by ECWA for the rehabilitation and maintenance of Lebanese road network. A working paper on this subject was prepared for the government's use in its negotiations with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the UNDP .
- in the field of industry, several contacts have been established with the Council for Reconstruction and Development, the Ministry of Industry and the Association of Lebanese Industrialists. Advisory services have been provided in connexion with the preparations for the industrial survey. Moreover, an outline for a policy paper on industrialization in Lebanon has already been prepared by the secretariat at the request of the Council for Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon. Other arrangements are being worked out for providing assistance in this field.
- an official request has been received from the Government for undertaking a project on population and housing data base. This request has been submitted to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in New York for approval. This project is expected to secure all population and housing information needed for policies that must urgently be undertaken by the Government after the events.
- at the request of the Government a paper on postwar livestock development in Lebanon was prepared by ECWA secretariat. It provides guidelines for short-term adjustments as well as to medium-term planning. It also sets the ground for long-term perspective planning of that important sector.

The Executive Secretary will continue to provide further assistance to Lebanon on priority basis within the resource constraints and the requirements of ECWA's work programme.

Resolution 41 (IV): Draft programme of work and
priorities of the Economic Commission for Western
Asia for the period 1978-1979

A separate document is submitted on this resolution under provisional
agenda item No. 6(c), document number E/ECW/60

Resolution 43 (IV): Co-operation with the
Economic Commission for Africa

The Commission under this resolution requested the Executive Secretary to work out arrangements for further co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa. In this connexion and upon an earlier agreement with ECA, work continued on the three projects embracing all the Arab countries: the publication of an annual statistical abstract, the brain-drain problem, and the establishment of an Arab regional documentation centre for Economic and Social Development. Furthermore, contacts continued with ECA, particularly with regard to the proposed Arab Regional Centre for the Transfer of Technology. ECA has been informed about all the steps taken and invited to participate in the various meetings held in preparation for the establishment of the Centre.

ECWA's contribution to the joint position paper of the regional commissions on TCDC to be submitted to the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, which will be held in Argentina in the summer of 1978, included a number of suggestions for the development of joint activities with ECA in areas of common concern. Contacts with ECWA will continue with a view to furthering co-operation and development of joint endeavours.

Resolution 46(IV): Co-operation among developing countries

Under operative paragraph (2) of the resolution, the Commission requested "the Executive Secretary to intensify his efforts in promoting co-operation among developing countries at the regional and interregional levels".

Pursuant to the above provision, the Executive Secretary continued to co-operate with the UNDP in convening the Regional Intergovernmental Meeting on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries in Kuwait from 24 to 29 May, 1977. ECWA's input for this meeting covered organizational and related administrative and conference arrangements. Additionally, ECWA closely collaborated in the substantive operations which included the provision of extensive data and information, and the preparation of a detailed outline for a basic background paper which was ultimately prepared by a consultant on "Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries in the West Asia Region". The paper stressed the importance of efforts underway by national, regional, intergovernmental and international institutions and organizations in the promotion and implementation of technical co-operation and pointed to the need of developing and strengthening viable and efficient institutions without duplication of efforts. Moreover, ECWA is continuing to fully co-operate with the UNDP in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries, scheduled for the summer of 1978. In this context, a paper has been prepared on the role of ECWA in TCDC as a contribution to the joint position paper of the regional commissions which will be submitted to the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries.

A further involvement of ECWA in promoting TCDC is reflected in its contribution to the UNDP Information Referral System (INRES) on TCDC by providing, through its TCDC focal unit, data on selected regional organizations which have capacities for TCDC.

ECWA prepared two reports to UNCTAD. One is on progress in special measures taken in favour of the least-developed countries of the region, and the other is on cross-organizational programme analysis on economic co-operation among developing countries. In fact, ECWA continues to adapt its work programme to regional priorities including technical and economic co-operation among developing countries.

A special effort was made in the area of food security planning with particular reference to co-operation among the Arab countries. In this respect, ECWA is co-sponsoring a major symposium on that subject with the Institute for Arab Studies and Research. This symposium is to be held in the spring of 1978.

In the population field an expert group meeting was held at Beirut from 12 to 16 December 1977, on "Census Techniques" where experts from ECWA's region shared their experiences and problems in the undertaking of population and housing censuses. Among the recommendations was one suggesting greater exchange of manpower and expertise between the countries of the region specifically during the time of census operations. Another example illustrating co-operation among developing countries is the recent arrival in Oman of three Syrian experts on survey techniques who are assisting the Omani Government in its socio-economic survey of nine towns.

Further information on ECWA's activities related to co-operation among developing countries is found under follow-up to the following resolutions: 38(IV) on a programme of action in favour of the least-developed countries of the region; 40(IV) on the reconstruction and development of Lebanon; 43(IV) on co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa; and 51 (IV) on study of the possibility of establishing a Western Asia Centre for the Transfer and Development of Technology.

Resolution 48 (IV): Economic survey of the countries members of the Economic Commission for Western Asia

Owing to the non-availability of resources from the regular budget no action could be taken by the Executive Secretary to initiate work on the full survey, on an annual basis, starting with the first year of the biennium 1978-1979. Extra-budgetary financing is being considered to finance, during the current biennium, the contemplated survey. Preparations are underway to develop a picture of the future survey's content and estimates of its resource requirements. The survey has been reinstated into the work programme of ECWA to be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations as of the Medium-Term Plan period 1980-1983. Meanwhile, work has been initiated to produce in 1978 the annual Review of Current Economic and Social Conditions in the ECWA Region.

Resolution 49(IV): Statistics and data needed
for the implementation of the work programme
of the Commission

During the past year ECWA increased the number and frequency of its missions to member countries for the purpose of data collection. Although the countries visited have co-operated to a good extent, it became increasingly evident that data collection cannot achieve optimum results. This is due, among other reasons, to the non-availability of the data in the countries themselves on one hand, and on the other to the large volume of classified data. For instance, in at least two member countries the currently official development plans are considered confidential and restricted.

The Commission may wish therefore to request the Executive Secretary to give priority to rendering assistance for the improvement of the national statistical systems and services in member countries, which may help to remedy the weakness of those systems in order to improve the quality and increase the quantity of data collection. The Commission may also wish to urge again member countries to increase their co-operation with the Secretariat by supplying it with the necessary data and information needed for the implementation of the programme of the various divisions.

The above notwithstanding preparation has been completed and issuance will soon be made of ECWA's second set of data sheets which cover roughly 40 demographic and related indicators for the members of ECWA referring approximately to the period from 1965 to 1975. Furthermore, the secretariat will soon complete its country profiles. These country profiles contain, for each country, information on its population data collection activities, a brief analysis of the most recent population and related socio-economic data available, a general view of prospective trends of population variables, a review of population policies undertaken by the country in question and an extensive bibliography on population research and other relevant publications relating to that country.

In addition the Population Bulletin of ECWA has been redesigned to emphasize more its role as the major scientific journal in the field dealing with population questions in this region. The Bulletin is produced both in Arabic and English and distributed free of charge to those interested in and/or working population issues in the region.

Resolution 51 (IV): Study of the possibility of establishing a Western Asia centre for the transfer and development of technology

As a first step in the implementation of this resolution the Executive Secretary engaged the services of a highly experienced consultant to assist in the execution of this project. A detailed plan of action was then prepared and implemented. This plan included the following steps:

1. An interagency preparatory meeting was held in Beirut, between 24-28 October 1977, to which representatives of UN agencies, Regional Arab Intergovernmental and Governmental Organizations were invited. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the terms of reference of the feasibility study for the establishment of the Arab regional centre.
2. Two field missions visited 20 Arab countries between 1 November and 18 December 1977. Arrangements were made with ECA to provide ECWA with mission reports on the five Arab-African countries covered by the ECA study while ECWA will provide ECA with reports on the other Arab countries in North Africa, which were covered by the field missions. Participation in these missions was open to all United Nations and Arab Organizations which were invited to the First Interagency Meeting. As a result of this open invitation, representatives from ALECSO, CAEU, FAO, ILO, UNCLAD, UNESCO and WIPO participated in the missions in addition to ECWA's experts. Upon completion of their field visits, members of both missions met with the consultant in Beirut. During this meeting, mission findings were discussed and evaluated.
3. Based on the discussions that took place in the First Interagency Meeting and using the mission findings and other information collected from national and international sources, the first draft of the feasibility study on the establishment of an Arab centre for the transfer and development of technology was prepared by the consultant. The study contained recommendations on governance, management, staffing, budget, location and function and services.

4. The draft was then discussed in a second interagency meeting held in Beirut between 27 February to 1 March 1978. The following 22 organizations participated in this meeting: ECA, FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UNIDO, WIPO, Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, IDCAS, ALECSO, CAEU, The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Islamic Development Bank, Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (Egypt), Centre for Scientific Research and Studies (Syria), Foundation for Scientific Research (Iraq), National Council for Scientific Research (Lebanon), The Royal Scientific Society (Jordan), and the Saudi Fund for Development. The views expressed in this meeting were later taken into consideration in preparing the First Revised Draft Feasibility Study.
5. As a result of a recommendation adopted by the Second Interagency Meeting, ECWA consulted the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States and decided in agreement with H.E. Secretary General of the Arab League;
 - (i) to postpone the intergovernmental meeting, originally scheduled for 27-29 March 1978, to 24-26 April 1978; (ii) to enlarge the participation in this meeting so as to include all concerned Arab Regional Organizations; (iii) to hold this meeting, as far as governments' representatives are concerned, at the level of ministers concerned with science and technology, and as far as as representatives of Arab Regional Organizations, at the level of the heads of these organizations, whenever possible (iv) and to have the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States represented in the meeting by the Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs.
6. As part of its policy to associate member governments in the preparation of this study, the ECWA secretariat organized an intergovernmental meeting at ministerial level between 24-26 April 1978, to which all Arab governments and concerned Arab regional organizations were invited. In this meeting, the First Revised Draft Feasibility Study was discussed by the participants. The views expressed during this meeting constitute the subject matter of the report on the intergovernmental meeting.
7. The Revised Draft Feasibility Study on the establishment of the Arab Regional Centre for the Transfer and Development of Technology, and the report on the Intergovernmental Meeting are being circulated in the present session for discussion and approval.